

REMARKS

This Application is a continuation of application 09/912,067 (the '067 application). In an Amendment filed for the '067 application on October 3, 2001, Applicants noted that some of the then-pending claims were copied from the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,096,052. In an Amendment filed for the '067 application on May 17, 2002, Applicants noted that some of the then-pending claims were copied from the claims of application 08/770,123.

This Application has been filed so as to preserve applicants rights to provoke an interference with the '052 patent and/or the '123 application. Claims 12-37 added in this preliminary amendment are based on claims 1-10 and 12-27 of the '067 application, as those claims were pending per an Amendment filed for that case on January 17, 2003. Furthermore, claims 12-18 added in this Preliminary Amendment correspond to and were copied from claims 28, 29, 31, 33, 40, 41, and 42 of Patent No. 6,096,052. Claims 19-21 of the present application correspond substantially with claims 28, 29, 31, and 33 of Patent No. 6,096,052. Claims 22-24 of present application correspond exactly to and were copied from claims 49, 52, and 53 of application 08/770,123 (as those claims were pending on January 10, 2002), while claim 25 of the present application corresponds substantially to claim 53 of the '123 application (as that claims was pending on January 10, 2002). Claims 26 and 27 of the present application correspond exactly to (and were copied from) claims 49 and 53 of the '123 application (as those claims were amended on August 21, 2002). Claims 28-34 substantially correspond to claims 54-60 of the '123 application. Claims 24-26 are amended versions of claims 12, 13, and 19 of the present application.

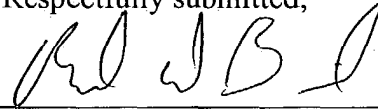
Attorney Docket No. 16355-002580
re NIKOLCHEV ET AL.
Preliminary Amendment

PATENT

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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